Merger of BPL Communications and Birla-Tata-AT&T combine

1458. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the merger of BPL Communications and Birla-Tata- AT&T combine resulting in a Rs. 9990 crore entity;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the above entity will be country's largest cellular operator with 25 per cent market share;

(c) if so, whether any investigation has been made into the merger from the stand point of collusive and anti-competitive practice;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : (a) No such noitice/petition has been received either from the Court or from the companies in this regard.

(b) to (e) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Vitamin cartel

1459. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government are aware of the international "Vitamin Cartel' in which several leading and sophisticated manufacturers of the world were investigated and prosecuted in the US, Austrailia, Canada, etc. for various anti-competitive behaviour ranging from fixing prices to allocating markets to bid-rigging;

(b)whether Government have investigated the impact of this global cartel on India;

(c)if so, the details thereof;

(d)if not, the reasons therefor;

(e)whether Government have received a request for investigation with supporting documentation from the Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) in this context; and

(f) if so, the response of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (f) Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) had made a complaint stating that an international cartel of vitamin manufacturers has been formed to fix prices, allocate markets, supply contracts and sales volume apart from bid-rigging at various times.

The MRTP Commission, which is a quasi-judicial body, has considered the matter and held that no case is made out.

Fast Track Courts

1460. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a)the number of fast track courts set up so far in various States under the scheme of Government to wipe out pending cases in lower judiciary; and

(b)the steps Government propose to take to wipe out the cases lying pending in various High Courts in the country relating to the payment of compensation to road accident victims?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) As per available information, 862 Fast Track Courts have been set up in various States so far.

(b) Both Government and the Judiciary are concerned with the mounting arrears of cases including cases relating to the payment of compensation to road accident victims. Various Steps are being taken by the Government to speed up the disposal of mounting arrears of cases. These include filling up of vacancies of judges of High Courts, strengthening of judicial infrastructure by construction of courtrooms and residences of judges, simplification of rules and procedures on the basis of advice and recommendations of expert bodies, like the Law Commission, the Malimath Committee, computerisation of High Courts, etc.

High Courts have also taken various measures for expeditious disposal of cases including classification and grouping of cases, identification and listing of cases covered by the decisions finally made by the Supreme Court and High court on the same point, preparation of causelists through computer, etc.